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THE NEW GATE
ザ・ニュー・ゲート
02.亡霊平原
アルファポリス

Volume 2 Special

Keep Hope Alive

That person was the first to be a direct follower of the High Human, dubbed the 『Dark Blacksmith』. Not bound to any country, the Calamity that was endangering the people was repelled by that Heroine. A beautiful High Elf, whose beauty had charmed the Kings of many nations.

Any of these three could be used when describing the person called Schnee Raizar.

To be recognized by the great existence known as High Humans, who held overwhelming strength, there is no end to the people planning to win over Schnee. However, none were successful.

Uninterested in both power and riches, even gifts of incredible value failed to sway her. When she was surrounded and approached by good-looking gentlemen of noble birth, she just smiled kindly and rejected them.

The only thing able to sway that Schnee's heart was info regarding her master, the 『Dark Blacksmith』, Shin.

If she hears that a person like that was in the west, then she goes to the west. If she hears that a man like that was spotted in the east, then she goes to the east. Schnee ran with all her strength.

"Well Tiera, I'm going to clean the entire store. Come get me if you need me."

"Alright."

Someone like her has a daily life.

People were often threatened by some danger. Most normal issues could be addressed by nations or by the guild of adventurers. If they always had to call on Schnee, national prestige would be at stake.

Also, it was difficult to get reliable information on Shin. Some seemed shady or was obviously a trap.

For this reason, she wasn't as busy as they thought.

For example, today she would spend the whole day thoroughly cleaning Tsuki no Hokora so that it would always be ready for Shin's return.

She let Tiera, an elf who she was protecting, to take care of store and then went to the smithy.

As nobody had used the smithy now, it was the same as the last time she visited. Nevertheless, she carefully checked to make sure none of tools were dusty.

Although dust didn't matter to tools made of the best materials, Schnee faithfully wiped each one in turn.

After she finished wiping them all, she sat on a chair at the corner and closed her eyes.

Alone in the room, she felt the silence.

With her eyes closed, she saw Shin; he was swinging a hammer and hitting iron; she heard the sound that was made every time that his hammer hit the iron. She remembered the days of being with her master. While today Shin was respected as a great blacksmith, he was not like that in the beginning. One day he learned a technique which required magical power. However, as he didn't have enough magical power, Schnee would sometimes have to help him make a sword. The first sword that he had made back then was stored in the storage room that she couldn't open.

The more Shin improved, the less he needed her help. Still, she was always there watching him work. Those memories never faded, no matter how many years passed by.

After a while, she opened her eyes and her master disappeared from view. Now all she could see was the idle furnace and tools without an owner.

“……”

She left the room without saying anything. The smithy was just the first place that needed cleaning. She moved on to the workshop. Weapons and protectors cannot be made solely of iron. Blacksmiths need many other materials such as the skins and scales of monsters and chemicals to treat them. As many kinds of materials are used in the workshop, it can easily get dirty. Even though there was a ventilation system here, the floors and walls sometimes got sticky. Thus, when Schnee was at Tsuki no Hokora, she cleaned here every day. When she was away, Tiera would clean here every couple of days.

“…Tiera worked here to make replacement items. Since she already finished them, she won’t be working here for a while.”

Schnee cleaned up with a brisk efficiency. She carefully wiped the glass door of the shelves. Tiera was surprise at her dedication to cleaning when she just came to Tsuki no Hokora.

“Well, it’s done.”

She was satisfied with the shiny floors and walls.

She continued cleaning Tsuki no Hokora with utmost dedication. She didn’t check Tiera’s room to maintain her privacy. Then again, she didn’t have to do that as Tiera didn’t let her room get messy.

She took a break to do the laundry and prepared a meal, then went back to cleaning. Finally she started to clean Shin’s room. She basically asked Tiera to clean the store, but his room was an exception. Only he or his servant was permitted to enter this room.

She sat on the bed and looked around the room. There was only a bed, a desk, a shelf with some trophies and basic furniture—the room was Spartan-like.

As he wasn’t interested in interior decoration, his room was simple and plain in a good way . It was non-descript in other words. She had very few memories of this room. Shin used this room just for sleeping—he described it as the “logout”.

“…just for a little bit, ok?”

She mumbled to herself as she lay down on his bed. As he was particular about his tools and furniture, his bed gently embraced her.

“……”

Schnee held his pillow and closed her eyes. Perhaps it was partly because she had just finished a meal, she fell to sleep.

It was 3 pm when Schnee woke up.

“……I did it again.”

She buried her face in his pillow and sighed. She hated herself for what she did in her master’s room. She couldn’t count how many times she had done the same thing. Despite her awareness, she couldn’t help but think; “I could see him in my dreams, I could be allowed to see him in my dreams”.

“I can’t show him myself like this.”

With the thought that he might be disappointed with her, she returned to her normal self. She slapped herself on the cheek to wake up. It made a dry sound and dispelled her melancholy mood.

“I’ve not searched everywhere for him yet. So it might still be possible to find him.”

She stood up and cheered herself up.

She would keep her hope alive and never give up as long as there was the possibility of finding him.

Suddenly, she heard Tiera outside. Schnee switched her mood and left Shin’s room. A visitor was with Tiera who asked Schnee to help him investigate the abnormal behavior of some monsters and if necessary, eradicate them.

“Okay.”

She nodded and asked him for details.

She was waiting for the day when her master came back. She kept her hope that her dream would come true.